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# SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FUENTES-IBAÑEZ (Bolivia)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of Mr. Khouini (Tunisia), Mr. Fuentes-Ibañez (Bolivia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY ON THE DEATH OF KAYSONE PHOMVIHANE, PRESIDENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

1. The CHAIRMAN, on behalf of all the members of the Committee, conveyed heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and to the bereaved family, on the death of Kaysone Phomvihane.

2. Mr. BOUDTAVONG (Lao People's Democratic Republic) thanked the Chairman for the expression of sympathy.

AGENDA ITEM 74: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (continued) (A/47/76, 262, 509 and 545-551; A/SPC/47/L.25-L.31)

3. Mr. POSSO SERRANO (Ecuador) cautioned that the repetition of denunciations of Israel in the report of the Special Committee and the debates of the Committee and the automatic adoption of traditional resolutions to that effect by both the Committee and the plenary Assembly had virtually no practical value and actually serve to reduce a very serious problem in the occupied territories to a routine matter.

4. Perhaps during the current debate in the Committee, delegations, as they expressed their moral support for the Palestinian people, ought to voice some hope that the direct negotiations between Arabs and Israelis might prove to be the practical, viable road to a settlement of their problem, which had thus far eluded them.

5. Mr. ARTZIELI (Israel) said that, in order to set a tone conducive to the peace process that was under way and to reduce polemics, he would refrain from repeating familiar arguments put forward in the Committee by Israel in the past or responding to the falsities, inaccuracies or lack of objectivity of the Special Committee's report (A/47/509) or of some of the statements heard in the current debate. In his own statement on agenda item 73 at the Committee's 11th meeting, he had enumerated the various steps taken by Israel during the reporting period to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian Arabs and had elaborated on the gestures made recently by the new Government of Israel.

6. The solution to the Palestinian issue lay in direct negotiations which would be likely to lead to a political settlement. Israel and its Arab neighbours, including the Palestinians, were indeed engaged in face-to-face bilateral and multilateral talks. The new Government of Israel had declared its determination to achieve peace and end the Arab-Israeli conflict. In its

(Mr. Artzieli, Israel)

basic guidelines, it had indicated that it would work towards the creation of a new Middle East, in which resources would no longer be devoted to the arms race but to development, grounded in economic, cultural and scientific cooperation on a regional scale. In pursuit of that goal, Israel placed great importance on the multilateral negotiations that complemented the bilateral negotiations, viewing them as a promising opportunity to rebuild the Middle East, remove the threat of war and endemic poverty and create a prosperous and safe region for the benefit of all its inhabitants.

7. In the bilateral negotiations Israel was, of course, holding talks also with the Palestinians. In his first statement to the Knesset in October, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had repeated Israel's call not to miss seizing the opportunity for peace. Israel was offering the Palestinians interim self-government arrangements within a relatively short period of time, having presented them with a series of proposals that gave substance to the idea of autonomy and that would enable them to conduct their own affairs under an administrative-executive council composed of representatives of the residents of the territories, chosen by elections if they so wished. In the third year of the implementation of the interim arrangements, negotiations on a permanent settlement would commence, based on the principles set forth in the letter of invitation to the Madrid Conference.

8. Israel's Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his address earlier in the session to the plenary Assembly, had acknowledged that Israel's interim proposal was imperfect, since self-government was less than independence, and that it would not be an easy choice for either side to a long and painful conflict. But it was clearly a way out of the existing impasse, and there was no more promising foreseeable alternative.

9. In the Committee as well, all should look to the future rather than entrenching themselves in the positions of the past. The world had changed, the Middle East was changing, yet outdated resolutions of the United Nations were lagging behind. One-sided, distorted, hostile resolutions hindered the peace process. They should therefore be deferred, and if they were not, they should be voted down as contrary to the content and spirit of the direct talks being conducted between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

10. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that it would be a banality to state that the situation in the occupied territories - the intifadah and the peace process in the Middle East notwithstanding - had not fundamentally changed over the past decade; yet it was a truth that assumed the proportions of tragedy when measured against other problems that the United Nations had tackled successfully in the recent past. It was not an accident that the Organization's involvement in the question of Palestine as a whole had been limited, if not marginal, although the recent appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the multilateral Middle East peace negotiations was encouraging and could well give momentum to the talks. As the peace process began to produce tangible results, a further enlargement of the United Nations role would be desirable.

(Mr. Freudenschuss, Austria)

11. Despite certain improvements in the situation in the occupied territories and the drop in the level of violence, as well as the more constructive approach of the current Israeli Government, which was welcome, the very essence of the problem remained the same: occupation, pure and simple. The aspirations of peoples could not be suppressed indefinitely, for they tended to assume almost mythical proportions and were ultimately unsubduable. The Committee's repeated appeals to Israel to respect the fourth Geneva Convention, to fulfil the more comprehensive obligations imposed by the customary law of human rights and to stop all settlement activities in the occupied territories would still be regarded only as a placebo by the Palestinians living in the occupied territories. What was really needed was a just and lasting political solution to the question of Palestine and the problem of the Middle East.

12. Mr. ALSAIDI (Yemen) said that, while the recent international détente had enabled international organizations to turn to the solution of regional conflicts, Israeli practices contrary to international custom and civilized behaviour created an obstacle to a just, comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute, the cornerstone of which was the Palestinian question. The documents relating to the item under discussion clearly showed the oppressiveness of those practices and the patent discrepancy between Israel's stated policy regarding the occupied Arab territories and its shameful actual practices. The only change that had taken place was that the information policy of the Labour Party was cleverer than that of the Likud Party.

13. As affirmed by the report of the Special Committee, the difficulties faced by the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories stemmed from the fact that the occupation itself was a violation of human rights. Therefore, Israeli practices designed to subjugate those inhabitants would end only with the end of the occupation, and until that time the situation in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, would remain grave.

14. His delegation felt that Security Council resolution 681 (1990) contained the necessary mechanism for limiting the suffering of unarmed citizens in the occupied Arab territories, provided Israel would abide by it. It supported the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Committee (A/47/509) that Israel should implement the fourth Geneva Convention and comply with the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions pertinent to the question of Palestine, that the Israeli authorities should cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross and that Members States should support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The United Nations and its Member States must exert strong pressure on Israel in order to compel it to fulfil its obligations under the Convention.

15. His delegation hoped that the current negotiations would lead to a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which must, in order to be successful, include the self-determination of the Palestinian people.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.